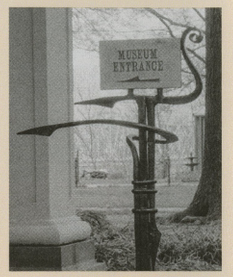
MUSEUM MILESTONES

1975 – The concept of an industry museum for metalworking is suggested at the ***National Ornamental & Miscellaneous Metals Association conference*** in Atlanta, GA.

1976 – The ***National Ornamental Metal Museum*** is chartered and a location is selected in Memphis, TN.



1979 – After two years of renovations, the ***Metal Museum opens on February 5*** on the site of an abandoned Marine Hospital.

1985 – The ***Blacksmith Shop*** is built and opens to the public. It hosts introductory classes and special workshops, and commissioned projects are made here.

1989 – Founding director James "Wally" Wallace issues a call for entries for the Museum's entrance gates. Over 350 rosettes are submitted for the ***10th Anniversary Gates***, designed by artist-blacksmith Richard Quinnell.

1993 – The Blacksmith Shop is expanded and a repair and restoration lab is added. This year, the Metal Museum hosts the first blacksmithing conference in Memphis, ***Forging on the River***.

2003 –

The ***Lawler Foundry*** is built for metal casting artists. In this building, the Museum hosts classes and produces a variety of commissioned work.

2007 – The hospital's former executive building undergoes renovation. It now houses the ***Library, Permanent Collection Galleries,*** and a ***Learning Space***.

2015 – The Metal Museum hosts its first conference for foundry artists, called the ***Foundry Invitational & River Exhibition*** (F.I.R.E.).

OUR MISSION

To preserve, promote, and advance the art and craft of fine metalwork.

METAL MUSEUM

374 METAL MUSEUM DRIVE
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38106
metalmuseum.org | (901) 774-6380
@memphismetalmuseum | @metalmuseum

THE STORY OF THE METAL MUSEUM

HISTORY, LEGACY, MISSION

METAL MUSEUM

THE STORY OF THE METAL MUSEUM

In 1975, the* National Ornamental & Miscellaneous Metals Association *conference was held in Atlanta, GA. At this conference, members of the Memphis Chapter proposed the creation of an industry museum to focus on preserving and advancing the field of fine metalwork.

The City of Memphis changed the name of the street leading to the Museum to Metal Museum Drive in 1997.

As a nonprofit organization with an educational focus, the Metal Museum met the usage requirements of the Heritage and Conservation Act and a lease for 3.2 acres of a former hospital complex property was obtained in July 1976 in exchange for a dollar a year. Over the next several years the hospital buildings were renovated and the Metal Museum opened to the public on February 5, 1979.

In the original charter, the Metal Museum was created to "display, show, and teach the history and achievements made by ornamental metals." This included primarily functional objects such as gates, railings, locks, and screens, many of which can be seen on display in the Museum's Library building. Only a few years after opening, the mission of the Museum and its collection expanded to include works of cast sculpture, holloware, contemporary jewelry, and other non-ferrous metals.

In 1983, the Metal Museum held its first *Master Metalsmith* exhibition as a way to honor the most influential artists in the metals field. In 2008, the Museum began the *Tributaries* exhibition series to support emerging and mid-career artists through solo exhibitions. These two series continue annually and many of the artists have donated their work to the Museum's collection of metal work. In addition to this artwork, the Permanent Collection contains over 3,000 objects that focus primarily on the post-Craft revival period from the 1970s to the present day.

After decades of renovation to the former hospital buildings, the Metal Museum campus is now comprised of an artist residence, the Blacksmith Shop, the Foundry, two buildings that house galleries, and a repair and restoration lab. The Museum Store, which encourages visitors to collect work handcrafted by living artists, is in the main museum building. In addition to displaying and collecting metalwork, the Museum supports the metalsmithing field by holding workshops and classes in the Metals Studio, hosting events and special programming, creating works of art in the Metals Studio, and training the next generation of artists through its apprenticeship and internship programs.

Laborers and volunteers work to restore the Library building in 2006.

Today, the Museum hosts events like *F.I.R.E.*, bringing metal artists together with the Memphis community.

Visit **metalmuseum.org** *to learn more about the variety of programs and events currently offered on our campus.*